

## 6 Lesotho Matselane B. Khaahloe<sup>21</sup>

### Introduction and background

Lesotho is completely landlocked by South Africa and is largely a mountainous country with four main geographical regions (ecological zones); the lowlands, the foothills, the highlands and the Senqu River Valley. Recent studies show that at present the population of Lesotho has stabilised to about two million (MOET 2006.)

#### *Socio- economic background*

According to Lesotho Overview of Economy (2010,) the economy of Lesotho greatly depends on subsistence agriculture, livestock, manufacturing and remittances from migrant labour in South Africa. Currently Lesotho's economic success stems mainly from water runoff from the mountains. This is the only important natural resource that results in Lesotho earning about 30 billion dollars a year. Like other developing countries, Lesotho strives to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to Education for All (EFA) and Gender equality by the year 2015 to alleviate poverty, to reverse the scourge of disease through quality education, mainstream HIV/AIDS and to eliminate gender disparities. Despite the current economic recession, according to World Bank Fast Track Lesotho Report 2009, the country allocates 20 per cent of its budget to education and this expenditure on education is considered high by international standards.

#### *Education in Lesotho: historical background*

Lesotho education can basically be classified into three main streams, which are: indigenous education, colonial education and post independence education. Indigenous education was the type of education that was mainly controlled by Basotho themselves, before the colonial era, and it was the informal type of education. In the indigenous education, the type of learning was oriented towards practical activities for boys and girls at home and in the plantation fields. Formal colonial education can be traced back to the arrival of the missionaries in the 1830s (Butterfield, 1977). The first missionaries came to Lesotho in 1833. The first formal school was started by one missionary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) during the 1830s, Constant Gosselin in 1833, another missionary had started an infants' school together with the adult centre which was attended by about 200 Basotho who were learning to read and write. More schools were established after the arrival of the Roman Catholics in 1862. By 1909 there were nine schools educating 1200 children (Butterfield, 1977:74). These schools were at elementary level. The first four secondary schools were established in 1948 and only one of them had senior classes (Ambrose 2007:76).

The National University was founded as Pius XII Catholic University College in 1938. The university became an independent and non-denominational University and was formally inaugurated as the University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland (UBBS in 1964). In 1966 the university was turned into the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (UBLS) when the three sister countries obtained independence. Ten years later, in 1975, the three institutions, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland were

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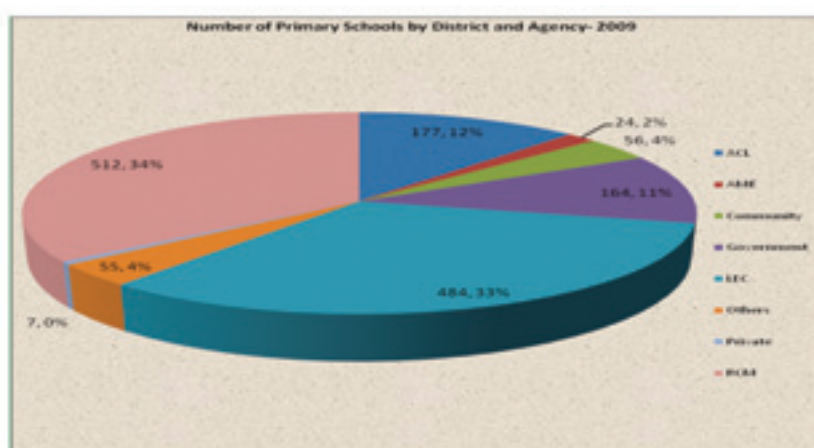
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officially split and the university in Lesotho became the National University of Lesotho. As Lesotho only got its independence in 1966, education remained the responsibility of the missionaries in Lesotho, from primary to tertiary, with the exception of the university, that remained the joint venture of the government and church denominations. Lesotho's education system has since been expanding and currently more so because of the influx of large numbers of primary pupils due to the introduction of Free Primary Education (FEP) in 2000.

#### *School proprietors*

Despite the fact that MOET is responsible for administration of finances and control of academic activities of all formal schools, the schools in Lesotho are owned in a partnership between the government and the churches or with the community. Recent estimates of statistics show that out of 1,476 primary schools, about 512 (34 per cent) schools belong to Roman Catholic Missions (RCM); 484 (33 per cent) belong to Lesotho Evangelical Church, while only about 164 (11 per cent) belong to the government of Lesotho. The rest of the primary schools belong to African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL) while very few are private schools.

**Figure 6.1 Ownership of primary schools**



Source: Lesotho Government Education Statistics Bulletin (2000).

#### *The school system in Lesotho*

The school system of Lesotho can be divided into five parts. These are: pre-schooling (ages 0–6 years) which is referred to as the Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD); primary schooling, for from 6–10 years; junior secondary schooling, which takes 3 years; and high schooling which takes a further 2 years.

Basic education is supposed to cover 10 years of continuous learning from age six (to be completed at the end of junior secondary). On successful completion of high school education students can enrol into different institutions of higher education. This depends on the individual performance of students and different entry requirements for admission of students into different courses. A number of public institutions exist. These include the Lesotho College of Education (LCE), the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP) and the newly founded university Limkokwing on 15 October, 2008.

#### *Teacher education*

During the colonial education era, between 1947 and 1959, there were about seven teacher training colleges around the country and these were governed by the churches

(Ambrose (2007:76). These colleges were later replaced by the National Teacher Training College (NTTC) now called Lesotho College of Education (LCE) in 1975 when they were turned into high schools. Lesotho College of Education (LCE) and National University of Lesotho (NUL) are the only two institutions of higher education charged with the responsibility of training teachers in the country. LCE trains both primary and secondary teachers. It offers diploma courses in secondary education and primary education. The primary diploma programme is offered both through the distance and the conventional modes. The National University also trains teachers through its faculty of education. For a very long time NUL focused only on secondary education offering both degree and diploma programmes in conventional mode. It is only recently that the university has started to train primary teachers using the Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode to offer higher diploma and degree programmes in primary education.

#### *Lesotho MOET policies in the context of EFA and MDGs*

In an endeavour to meet the MDGs and EFA, the Government of Lesotho (GOL) implemented Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2000. This resulted in significant increases in enrolments in primary schools and it must be noted that as a consequence, this escalated to secondary school level when the first cohort of FPE entered this level. Lesotho was then faced with problems of overcrowded lower classes (grades), high teacher-pupil ratios and lack of an adequate and qualified teaching labour force. Most importantly the country was faced with the challenge of education quality. The quality of education in the era of HIV/AIDS is also a concern because of high teacher attrition. In response to these problems and challenges, MOET has built a number of schools and classrooms; recruited more teachers; provided book rental and school feeding schemes as well as subsidising school fees in secondary schools (MOET 2009). In primary schools, FPE policy abolished school fees on an annual incremental basis starting with grade one in 2000 until 2006 when all the primary grades had no school fees. In 2007 GOL further passed the Act on Universal Primary Education (UPE) by which education will be free and compulsory.

There is great pressure for expansion of the education system in Lesotho. The government of Lesotho has planned provisions for equal and accessible opportunities of basic education at an equitable basis to all the people as a key developmental goal. Basic education is seen as an essential part of social and economic development and is therefore regarded by the government of Lesotho as a fundamental human right. Basic education is also regarded to be an essential pre-requisite for mid level employment as well as secondary and post-secondary and training. This is expected to create the practical skills and knowledge that will facilitate rapid and better integration of Basotho men, women and children and as well as to reduce poverty. The education sector is therefore moving towards improving the quality of education in Lesotho by equipping schools and educational centres, reforming the curriculum, ensuring provision of teaching and learning materials, investing in teacher training and professional development and providing cost-effective and efficient teacher supervision and support. At present, one of Lesotho's greatest challenges is that of teacher shortages at both primary and secondary levels. While numbers of teachers have increased in the last ten years, the percentage of qualified teachers has dropped significantly (Education International, 2007). This could be attributed to the rise in enrolments after the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2000. As a result, while access has increased between 1999 – 2008 with an old NER of 57 compared to 73 respectively (GMR, 2010), the issue of quality in education is a prevalent one. Where secondary education is concerned, the problem of teacher supply is indicative within the far more worrying enrolment rates: in 1999 the GER was 30, with an increase to 40 by 2008.

### Situational analysis on the feminisation of the teaching profession

Both statistical analysis and document analysis were undertaken with the purpose of analysing and examining existing and relevant statistics and documents to uncover the extent of feminisation of the teaching profession at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in Lesotho.

#### *Female teachers in Lesotho*

According to Boyle (1985) feminisation of teaching refers to a numerical overdependence of women in the profession. By observation this situation has been in existence in many Lesotho schools for years. The MOET report (May, 2005) points out that the teaching force is largely comprised of women. In 2004 MOET (2004) reported that the proportion of female teachers ranged from 71–83 per cent among the four main geographical zones of Lesotho. The report indicated that the teaching force is predominantly female with about 80 per cent of teachers being females (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1 Primary teachers and pupils by gender and geographical zone, 2004**

Geographical zone	Foothills	Lowlands	Highlands	Senqu River Valley
Female teachers	79%	83%	71%	74%
Female pupils	49	49	48	50

Source: MOET Planning Unit

Table 6.1 indicates a very high level of female representation in the Lesotho teaching force in 2004 whilst on the other side the average female pupils' representation was close to a gender balance at 50 per cent. An average of 77 per cent female representation of female teachers in primary schools signifies very high levels of feminisation.

It was necessary to carry out this situational analysis in order to have a broad picture of the extent of feminisation, the underpinning factors, and the accompanying consequential perceptions on the status of teaching profession. Other factors that also enter the debate include boy-child academic performance and teachers' salaries. The findings of this situational analysis may function as indicators or as a monitoring tool to measure how far Lesotho is with regard to achievement of EFA and MDGs. The findings of the study may also assist in establishing sound intervention strategies in line with EFA goals and MDGs. Most importantly, the study will inform policy-makers, institutions of teacher education, educators at all levels as well as international NGOs in partnership with MOET in Lesotho.

#### *Gender representation among primary and secondary school teachers by districts*

The following table provides comparative analysis of gender inequalities in secondary and primary school teacher numbers by district in 2010.

Table 6.2 explicitly displays a statistical feminisation of the teaching profession at both secondary and primary levels in Lesotho. The extent of this feminisation does vary however. While the level of feminisation is comparatively high in primary schools (67–80 per cent) than in secondary schools (51–59 per cent), it is also clear that the levels of feminisation are highest in lowlands for primary schools; that is in Maseru (80 per cent) and Leribe (82 per cent) respectively. These are the most industrialised areas in Lesotho and they are mostly located in the lowlands region. An overall average percentage of 74 per cent is evidently a clear indication of high measure of feminisation of teaching profession at primary education level in Lesotho while 57 per cent average representation of for secondary schools is moderate this year (2010).

Table 6.2 Lesotho primary and secondary teachers by gender and by district, 2010

District	Post primary				Primary			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	All	%	All	%	All	%	All	%
Thaba-Tseka	68	49	72	51	199	33	411	67
Qacha's Nek	67	41	98	59	135	27	358	73
Mokhotlong	59	43	81	57	170	31	386	69
Maseru	330	34	641	66	408	20	1621	80
Mafeteng	224	44	282	56	225	29	776	71
Leribe	339	46	407	54	286	18	1312	82
Mohales'Hoek	134	37	224	67	258	20	1035	80
Berea	201	41	290	59	278	21	1002	79
Butha-Buthe	82	27	225	73	138	20	550	80
Quthing	117	45	141	55	200	27	528	73
<b>Total and av. (%)</b>	<b>1621</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2461</b>	<b>59</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>75</b>

Source: District education offices and MOET planning unit (2007 & 2008)

*Gender distribution of teachers at all levels of education*

The next sections examine gender distribution of teaching staff in MOET sectors including primary, secondary and tertiary sectors examined over an eleven year timeframe.

*Female teachers in Lesotho primary and secondary schools since 1999*

Table 6.3 and Figure 6.2 below present Lesotho secondary and primary teachers by gender between 1999 and 2010.

Table 6.3 Primary and secondary teachers by gender, 1999–2009

Year	Secondary					Primary				
	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%
2010	4382	1621	37	2461	63	10276	2297	22	7979	78
2009	4735	2077	44	2658	56	11536	2672	23	8864	77
2008	4307	1181	27	2426	73	10778	2471	23	8316	77
2007	4008	1756	44	2250	66	10778	2471	23	831	77
2006	3673	1653	44	2020	56	10418	2335	24	8083	76
2005	3495	1543	44	1952	56	10154	2342	21	8812	79
2004	3404	1477	43	1927	57	9993	2098	21	7894	79
2003	3470	1572	45	1898	55	9294	1936	21	7358	79
2002	3384	1540	45	1844	55	8908	1803	20	7105	80
2001	3290	1520	46	1770	54	8762	1746	20	7016	80
2000	3198	1495	46	1703	54	8578	1700	20	6878	80
1999	3175	1428	45	1747	55	8225	1630	20	6595	80
<b>Averages (%)</b>			<b>43</b>					<b>22</b>		<b>78</b>

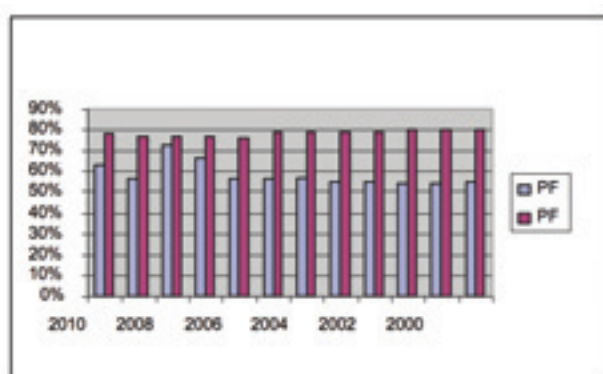
Source: MOET Planning Unit (2009).

The table above demonstrates that majority female teachers within the primary education system has been the case for over ten years, with women already dominated that sector of the profession (80th percentile) since 1999. A review of the numbers immediately highlights the fact that primary education is currently far better resourced in comparison to secondary education in Lesotho. However, the increase in female teachers over the ten year period (and therefore since the introduction of FPE) has only been by 2,000 teachers. During this increase, the percentage of female teachers has actually decreased. In primary schools women teachers constitute between 76–80 per cent, with an average of 78 per cent. In secondary schools the percentage of female teachers ranges between 57 per cent and 54 per cent with an average of 55 per cent. This is much lower than in primary schools. Gender representation for male primary teachers ranges between 20 per cent and 24 per cent with an average representation of 22 per cent. The gender imbalance in secondary schools is lower. Male representation is a little higher in secondary schools although it ranges between 27 per cent and 46 per cent. Figure 6.2 provides a clear graphical picture that compares feminisation of teaching profession in primary (PF) and secondary (SF) schools over the given period. This result is

an overall high degree of feminisation at the primary level across all years, with medium to high levels of feminisation at the secondary level across the same period.

Other trends do also need to be noted within this data set. Firstly, additional secondary data corroborates that women's importance within the teaching profession has is far from a new phenomenon: the National Teacher Training College records about five times as many women teacher trainees as men in 1994 (Lephoto, 2002). Primary teacher numbers appear to have dropped in the last three years by about 500 teachers – the reasons for this are unclear. Secondly, in reviewing this data, the issue of unqualified teacher numbers within these statistics need to be addressed. Statistics for 2007 indicate that at the primary level about 30 per cent of teachers in the workforce were unqualified (UNESCO International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, 2007). This percentage is as high as 59 in the remote Mountain Zone (Phamotse et al, 2005).

Figure 6.2 Female teachers in both primary and secondary schools



Source: MOET planning unit 2009.

When comparing the degree of feminisation of teaching staff in secondary and primary schools (Table 6.3 and Figure 6.2) it is clear that although feminisation of the teaching profession is highest at primary level, in 2007 and 2008 an increase in female numbers at the secondary level is also observed, with the percentage in 2008 going above the 70th percentile, before dropping once again in 2009 to just over the 50th percentile.

#### *Gender distribution of teaching staff at tertiary level*

Gender distribution among the teaching staff at LCE was examined as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 LCE teaching staff by department and gender, 2009

Department	Teaching Staff				Total
	Males	%	Females	%	
Social Sciences	8	42	11	58	19
Education Foundation	9	64	5	36	14
Faculty of Education	4	57	3	43	7
Curriculum & Instruction		0	2	100	2
Applied Sciences	3	30	7	70	10
Pure Sciences	9	47	10	53	19
Technology Studies	8	100	0	0	8
Creative Art	3	33	2	67	5
Literature and Languages	5	36	14	74	19
DTEP	6	26	17	74	23
<b>Total/%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>127</b>

Source: MOET Planning Unit 2009.

Similar to secondary and primary schools, gender disparity is also evident at LCE with a representative percentage of 57 per cent in favour of women. There are no male lecturers at all in department of curriculum and instruction, although it is notable that

there are no women in the department of technology studies. It can be concluded that despite the feminised teaching labour force at LCE, gender inequality in favour of men is evident in department of technology studies. Overall, the disparity gender disparity within the LCE teaching cohort is not proportionate with the gender disparity of the teaching profession (primary and secondary combined) as a whole (57 per cent compared to 80 per cent). This indicates that men are more likely to be found in roles as teacher educators as opposed to teachers themselves. The next section presents enrolments in the IECCD centres, primary and secondary schools by gender.

*Enrolments in IECCD centres, primary and secondary schools by gender*

Enrolments of learners at all levels of MOET also play an important role to show the extent of the statistical feminisation of teaching profession is, and to determine if there is any link between feminisation of teaching profession and learners' population in registered schools. Enrolments in IECCD centres (2000–2003), primary and secondary schools (1999–2009) and two main institutions NUL and LCE were also scrutinised to establish whether they contribute to high levels of feminisation in the teaching profession. Table 6.5 presents data on enrolments in IECCD centres.

**Table 6.5 Enrolments in IECCD centres by gender, 2000–2003**

Year	Total	M	%	F	%
2002	41469	21520	52	19949	48
2001	34507	17284	50	17223	50
2000	30540	15216	50	15324	50
<b>Average %</b>			<b>51</b>		<b>49</b>

Source: MOET Planning Unit 2009.

According to country level statistics, gender representation in enrolments of early childhood education from 2000–2003 and basic primary education is balanced (Tables 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7. The average gender representations for males and females are 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively. Minor differences of 2 per cent in favour of males in 2002 are observed at IECCD level. The conclusion is that the gender representation is balanced in IECCD.

**Table 6.6 Enrolments in primary and secondary schools by gender, 1999–2009**

Year	Secondary					Primary				
	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%
2009	111,488	46,880	42	64,600	58	389,424	193,105	50	196,319	50
2008	103,317	44,162	43	59,155	57	396,041	200,332	51	195,709	49
2007	97,936	42,357	43	55,595	57	400,934	202,710	51	198,224	49
2006	94,545	42,357	44	52,908	56	425,855	214,123	50	210,732	50
2005	93,096	41,086	44	52,010	56	422,278	212,683	50	209,595	50
2004	88,142	38,915	44	49,227	56	429,009	214,321	50	214,179	50
2003	83,104	36,621	44	46,483	56	429,720	214,974	50	214,746	50
2002	81,130	35,467	44	45,663	56	418,668	209,024	50	209,644	50
2001	77,919	34,226	44	43,693	56	415,007	206,665	50	208,342	50
2000	72,992	31,537	44	41,455	56	410,745	202,760	49	207,985	51
1999	72,437	30,833	43	41,604	57	364,951	176,365	48	188,586	52
<b>Averages %</b>										

Source: MOET Report 2009.

At primary level gender representation is mostly balanced with 50:50 representations for six consecutive years (2001–2006) and in 2009. Minor disparities are seen in 2007 and 2008 (1 per cent) in favour of males and 1999 and 2000 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively in favour of females. In secondary schools, differences in per cent are broadening. In 1999 the difference was 3 per cent; it narrowed to 2 per cent from 2000 to 2006 and widened again to 3 per cent from 2007 to 2008. The biggest difference was observed in 2009 when it increased to 6 per cent. It can be inferred that

the enrolments rates in preschools, primary schools and secondary schools do not contribute to high feminisation levels in teaching profession as there is more gender balance. However, it may be argued that the widening gap may be the beginning of gender inequalities as the learners proceed to higher levels

*Enrolments and gender representation in main tertiary institutions in MOET*

This section examines status of feminisation in LCE and NUL. Enrolment rates at teacher training institutions will facilitate and clarify whether the disproportioned gender distribution in the teaching profession emanates from enrolments and access to teacher education.

*Gender patterns in teacher training: enrolments at LCE, 1998–2010*

Table 6.7 illustrates gender distribution in enrolments of primary and secondary teacher trainees at LCE from 1998 to 2010. Data was obtained from Student Information Management system (SIMS).

**Table 6.7 Teacher trainees at LCE by gender, 1998–2010**

Year	Secondary teacher trainees					Primary teacher trainees				
	ALL	M	%	F	%	All	M	%	F	%
2010	401	147	37	254	63	2478	763	31	1715	69
2009	371	125	34	246	66	3061	952	31	2109	69
2008	341	129	38	212	62	3010	903	30	2107	70
2007	270	97	36	173	64	2991	772	26	2219	74
2006	350	126	36	224	64	2729	741	27	1988	73
2005	189	75	40	114	60	1866	450	24	1416	76
2004	147	51	35	96	65	1883	496	26	1378	74
2003	244	99	41	145	59	1225	348	28	877	72
2002	190	37	20	153	80	1338	355	27	983	73
2001	402	131	33	271	67	597	149	25	448	75
2000	376	148	39	228	61	595	118	20	476	80
1999	323	123	38	200	62	625	104	17	521	83
1998	323	125	39	198	61	602	102	17	500	83
<b>Average (%)</b>			<b>36</b>		<b>64</b>			<b>25</b>		<b>75</b>

Source: Lesotho College of Education SIMS 2010.

High levels of gender disproportion at LCE are highly conspicuous and largely correlate with gender representation of teachers at both primary and secondary schools (Tables 6.6 and 6.7) and (Figures 6.3 and 6.4). The males in primary teacher education are less represented than their counterparts in secondary teacher education. Similarly, although there are more females than males in registered teacher trainees in secondary division, the females in primary division are far more highly represented than their counterparts in secondary division. The average gender representations for females in secondary and primary divisions are 64 per cent and 75 per cent respectively and 36 per cent and 25 per cent for males in secondary and primary division respectively. It is clearly indicated that feminisation is at its highest levels in primary division than in secondary division among the teacher trainees at LCE.

The numbers above also indicate insights that are important to note: firstly, the increase in teachers at the primary level in terms of numbers has clearly been greater than that at secondary school over the last ten years. In terms of gender, the proportion of female primary teacher numbers has grown only three-fold since the 1999 rate, while for male teachers there has been a six fold increase in their number. This indicates that while women continue to dominate as trainees within primary teaching, their numbers as qualified teachers has visibly decreased. At the secondary level the rate of increase in teacher trainees has been accompanied by a lack of visible change in the proportion of women.

The issue of unqualified teachers working in Lesotho schools is crucial area that needs greater understanding within the gender context of the teacher trainee figures



presented above. A 2005 study (Phamotse et al.) highlighted this problem, particularly in the under-resourced rural areas where qualified teachers are less likely to want to be deployed to. Figures indicated that within the teaching force male teachers were more likely to be unqualified. This information highlights a serious of problems that implicate issues not just with training, but also with deployment and/or broader work availability. Earlier data indicated that women teachers are more prevalent in the lowland and urban areas, where the facilities are not only more conducive but where there is a higher possibility of alternative employment for men. The issue of unqualified teachers in the more remote highland areas is therefore also potentially tied to the lack of female teachers in those regions.

*Enrolments at NUL by gender from 1994/95 to 2008/09*

Enrolments at National University of Lesotho have been increasing over years.

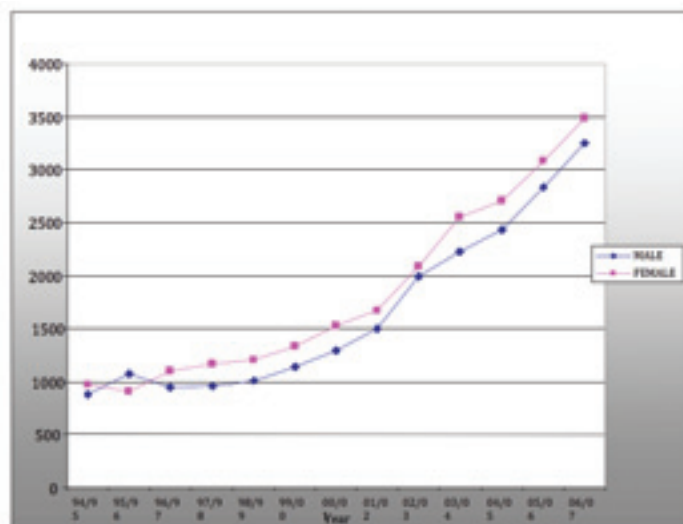
**Table 6.8 NUL undergraduates by sex, 1994/95–2008/09**

Year	MALES			FEMALES	
	All	M	%	F	%
08/09	8,146	3,892	47	4,302	53
07/08	7,346	3,473	47	3,873	53
06/07	6,724	3,247	48	3,477	52
05/06	5,921	2,838	48	3,083	52
04/05	5,140	2,439	47	2,701	53
03/04	4,765	2,221	47	2,544	53
02/03	4,067	1,989	49	2,078	51
01/02	3,167	1,503	47	1,664	53
00/01	2,812	1,289	46	1,523	54
99/00	2,471	1,142	46	1,329	54
98/99	2,208	1,004	45	1,204	55
97/98	2,118	959	45	1,159	55
96/97	2,048	947	46	1,101	54
95/96	1,981	909	46	1,072	54
94/95	1,855	882	49	973	51
Average %			47		53

Source: MOET Planning unit 2008.

Gender representation in overall enrolments of undergraduates at NUL seems to be more balanced than at LCE. The line graph in Figure 6.4 further shows the consistency of disparities and how the differences of gender representation deviated within the range of 1 per cent and 8 per cent over a period of 15 years.

**Figure 6.3 NUL undergraduates, 1994/95-2006/07**



Source: MOET Planning unit 2008.

Figure 6.3 compares male and female students' representations among NUL undergraduates. Although there were more females than males over 13 years, the gender disparities are not wide. In the academic year 1996/97 there were more male students than female students.

*Gender distribution in headship positions in primary and secondary schools*

Gender disparities among the primary and secondary school principals were also examined and information in Table 6.9 was collected from TSC data for teachers.

**Table 6.9 Secondary and primary principals by districts by gender, 2010**

	Secondary School Principals					Primary school				
	Total	M	%	F	%	Total	M	%	F	%
Berea	31	16	52	15	48	123	23	19	100	81
Butha-Buthe	18	6	33	12	67	63	7	11	56	89
Leribe	50	19	38	31	62	98	26	27	72	73
Mafeteng	20	9	45	11	55	110	33	30	77	70
Mohales'Hoek	23	16	70	7	30	–	–	–	–	–
Quthing	19	18	95	1	05	8	0	0	8	100
Qacha's Nek	13	6	46	7	54	30	15	50	15	50
Mokhotlong	15	10	67	5	33	62	20	32	42	68
Thaba-Tseka	13	8	62	5	38	51	30	59	21	41

Source: Teaching Service Commission (2010).

Congruent to observed high feminisation of teaching staff in primary schools, there are more female principals than male principals in almost all of Lesotho with the exception of Qacha's Nek and Thaba-Tseka, where gender distributions are 50:50 and 59:41 in favour of male principals respectively. The highest gender disparities in favour of females are observed in the districts of Berea, Butha-Buthe and Quthing with the percentage range between 81 per cent and 100 per cent. Although the female teachers seem to hold more headship positions in primary schools, in secondary schools gender disparities are not as wide as in primary schools. The reverse situation is observed in districts of Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong, Mohales'Hoek and Quthing where more headship positions are comparatively held by the male principals. Furthermore, there are more secondary male principals than female principals in mountain districts (Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong). It can be concluded that female primary teachers hold more positions of principals than their counterparts in secondary schools. In secondary schools more men than women hold headship positions.

*Gender distribution in leadership positions at LCE*

For tertiary level the focus was on teacher education institutions; LCE and NUL as the only institutions of higher education charged with the responsibilities of training teachers in the country. Gender representation in leadership and management positions LCE is presented in the following table.

**Table 6.10 Senior management positions by gender at LCE, 2010**

Position	Number(s)	Males	Females
Rector	1	1	–
Deputy rectors	2	1	1
Directors	6	4	2
Librarian	1	–	1
Bursar	1	–	1
Registrar	1	–	1
Deans	3	3	–
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

Source: Lesotho College of Education calendar 2009–2010.

According to Colman (2003: 58) leadership is a much ‘gendered’ concept in a wide variety of cultural contexts; it continues to be identified with the male and there is a tendency to assume that the ‘rightful’ leader is a male. In line with Colman’s view, the Deans’ positions are only held by men at LCE and the directorate positions are also held by a low percentage of women (33 per cent). The Deputy Rectors’ positions are equally distributed between the two genders. Figure 6.4 further clarifies the status quo with regard to gender representation in management positions at LCE by providing graphical comparison of representation between the two genders. Out of six directors there are only two who are female. Despite the large numbers of women teachers, and the fact that women staff also constitute a modest majority within LCE (59 per cent) female managers comprise only 40 per cent of senior management team at LCE. From the data presented in Figure 6.4 and Table 6.10, it can be construed that the highest positions are held by men while more women hold the middle management positions at LCE. This indicates that statistical ‘feminisation’ of the teaching profession is mainly applicable to the role of teachers themselves, as opposed to the entire structure of the teaching profession.

Figure 6.4 Senior management positions by gender at LCE, 2010



Source: LCE Calendar 2009/2010.

*Gender representation in leadership positions at NUL*

The following table illustrates gender representation in leadership and management positions at NUL from vice chancellor to deans.

Table 6.11 Senior management positions at NUL, 2010

The picture here is more complex: most senior positions (VC and PVC) at NUL are

Position	Numbers	Males	Females
Acting VC	1	1	–
Acting PVC	1	1	–
Librarian	1	–	1
Registrar	1	–	1
Directors	3	1	2
Deans	7	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>		

Source: Institute of Education NUL (2010).

occupied by males while two out of three directors are females at NUL. The biggest magnitude of gender disparity is observed in the positions of the deans; there is only one female dean out of seven deans. This further confirms the observations that despite high levels of feminisation within teacher numbers, the most senior positions are held by males at the tertiary level.

*School performance and transitions by gender*

Results from the 2007–2008 Primary School Leaving Examinations (ECOL, 2008) showed that overall boys and girls are performing roughly about the same. A district wide analysis

of the results suggests that boys actually receive better pass marks than girls in five out of the ten districts (when reviewing the first class pass percentages), and were only a few percentage points behind girls in other districts. Three of the districts with the highest grades overall – such as Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek and Butha-Buthe – had varied female teacher percentages from 67 per cent (Thaba-Tseka) to 80 per cent (Butha-Buthe).

The performance of boys at primary schools relative to their female counterparts was further demonstrated with transition rates. Standard seven in basic education is the exit point from primary into junior secondary schools and the transition rates at this point are presented in Table 6.12.

**Table 6.12 Transition rates from Standard 7 to Form A, 2001–2009**

Year	Transits from Standard 7 to Form A			Transition rates		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
2001	9799	13035	22834	67.0	66.7	66.8
2002	10354	13698	24046	65.3	62.2	63.5
2003	10121	13138	23259	63.6	62.1	61.6
2004	10892	14367	24809	67.5	64.7	66.5
2005	11586	14999	26585	69.6	68.3	68.9
2006	10924	14205	25129	70.3	69.1	69.6
2007	12995	17980	30975	68.3	66.4	67.2
2008	12527	17525	30052	68.0	70.0	69.2
2009	13198	18105	31303	71.7	74.1	73.1

Source: MOET Planning Unit (2009).

The transition rates at these levels show that from 2001 to 2007 more males than females were able to pass standard seven and proceed to junior secondary. Minor differences were only observed in 2008 and 2009 when more females than males from primary schools went to secondary schools.

**Table 6.13 Transition rates from Form C to Form D, 2001–2009**

Year	Males	Females	Total
2001	73.8	72.4	73.0
2002	74.3	75.2	74.8
2003	79.0	77.0	77.9
2004	78.3	76.4	77.2
2005	75.2	73.7	74.4
2006	75.2	73.2	74.2
2007	68.7	67.0	67.7
2008	71.8	75.7	74.0
2009	71.7	78.2	75.3

Source: MOET Planning Unit (2009).

Transition rates between junior secondary and senior secondary levels were also inspected. According to Table 6.13, transition rates seem to have been deviating annually; in 2001 more males than females went to senior secondary schools. However this changed in 2002 when more female students entered into the senior level. The situation continued until 2008 and 2009 when more male students went to high schools.

The tables present two interesting assumptions regarding teacher profession feminisation: firstly, male students are not necessarily underperforming compared to their female counterparts, and therefore this cannot be attributed in any way to the reason why males are not going into the teaching profession; and secondly that a majority of female teachers (75 per cent at primary and 59 per cent at secondary) are not adversely affecting the transition rates of one gender over the other.

#### *Number of graduates at exit levels in tertiary institutions*

It was also necessary to examine gender representation amongst the graduating students at exit level as this could be in a position to present a clearer picture of the main source of feminisation of teaching profession.

*Teacher trainee graduates at LCE by gender (2002–2009)*

The following table portrays the gender distribution among the graduating students in years 2002–2009.

**Table 6.14 Teacher trainee graduates at LCE by gender, 2002–2009**

Year	Secondary teacher trainees					Primary teacher trainees				
	All	M	%	F	%	All	M	%	F	%
2009	262	94	36	168	64	844	253	30	590	70
2008	258	69	27	176	73	537	150	28	387	72
2007	194	82	42	112	58	526	132	25	394	75
2006	115	44	38	71	62	210	56	27	154	73
2005	110	55	50	55	50	218	55	25	163	75
2004	102	40	39	62	61	242	55	23	187	77
2003	116	45	39	71	61	224	65	29	159	71
2002	119	48	40	71	60	181	50	28	131	72

Sources: LCE Graduation Programmes (2007–2009).

Table 6.14 also corroborates data presented earlier, with female graduate representation evident at LCE. Feminisation is evident in both secondary and primary graduates however; it is highest among primary graduates. Female representation among secondary graduates ranges between 50 per cent and 73 per cent while for primary graduates the range is 70–77 per cent. On the other hand, males are under-represented among both the primary and the secondary graduates with the ranges between 23 per cent and 30 per cent; and 27–50 per cent. Throughout the annual increase in number of graduating students (quite a dramatic increase at the primary level in 2008), feminisation of teaching profession continues to be observed throughout the years, although the percentage of female graduates has not increased significantly.

*Graduating students at National University Lesotho in 2010*

At the National University of Lesotho (NUL), lists of graduating prospective teachers were also scrutinised for gender representation. The analysis focussed only on teacher education programmes and this was determined by the context of this study. Table 6.15 illustrates a profile of graduating student teachers at NUL for the 35th convocation on Saturday, 25 September 2010.

**Table 6.15 Graduating secondary and primary teacher trainees at NUL, 2010**

Degrees/diplomas	Graduates				
	All	Males		Females	
		No.	%	No.	%
Postgraduate Diploma in Education	14	6	43	8	57
Master of Adult Education	16	3	18	13	82
Bachelor of adult Education	44	6	14	38	86
Bachelor of Education	310	102	33	208	67
Bachelor of Science Education	48	34	71	14	29
Higher Diploma in primary Education	220	50	23	170	77
Diploma in Agricultural Education	19	9	47	10	53
<b>Average graduating teachers %</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>36 %</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>64 %</b>

Source: NUL graduation programme (2010).

This also corroborates that there are more women more women than men in teaching profession in Lesotho; more female student teachers than male student teachers graduated from NUL in recent graduation( 25 September 2010). The percentage of female graduates is not markedly different to those at LCE. It can be inferred that the feminisation of teaching starts with entry into the teaching profession at the level of training. Despite high levels of female representation in almost all teacher education programmes for the graduating student teachers of NUL this year (2010), an exceptionally very low representation of women (29 per cent) who obtained qualifications in Bachelor of Science Education (B.SC.ED) was revealed. Similar to most

of primary teacher groups, men were least represented (23 per cent) in Higher Diploma in Primary Education programme graduated this year.

### The field research

This section delineates the methods and procedures followed to carry out the empirical component of the study.

The purpose of the empirical research was to:

- identify factors that contribute to feminisation of the teaching profession at primary level;
- determine the impact of feminisation – if any – on the performance of boys, on the status of the profession, and on the salaries of teachers;
- uncover ways of striking a balance between proportions of men and women in the teaching profession.

### Research tools

Two qualitative questionnaires (A and B) were used to collect data in this case study. The purpose of questionnaire A was to find in-depth opinions with respect to reasons for high levels of feminisation of the teaching profession in primary schools, its impact on performance of the boys, the status of the profession and the salaries of teachers. The questionnaire further searched for the opinions of the teachers with regard to the strategies that may be implemented to retain the male teachers that are already in the profession and attract more to join the profession. The purpose of questionnaire B was to close the gaps in data collected in using questionnaire A.

### Sampling techniques

For questionnaire A, cluster sampling was found appropriate to sample four out of ten districts of Lesotho. One district was selected from each of four main geographic zones to represent a cluster. The schools and teachers were selected conveniently on the basis of availability and accessibility because of time and budgetary constraints. Sixty was the targeted number of teachers per district regardless how many were available from each of the participating schools. The return rates vary between 58 and 38 completed questionnaires, totalling 154 responses in all.

Table 6.16 Sample of districts per ecological region

Ecological zone(s)	Foothills	Lowlands	Highlands	Senqu River Valley
District	Berea	Maseru	Mokhotlong	Qacha's Nek

Figure 6.5 Ten districts of Lesotho



For questionnaire B convenience sampling was also found suitable. Sampling mostly depended on availability and convenience of teachers, and was much smaller in size. 60 teachers (30 males and 30 females) were targeted. Some teachers were the current students in advanced diploma in special education programme at LCE (The programme is a new one year primary teachers' programme in special education, it is offered to experienced and qualified primary teachers who already hold PTC, APTC or DEP certificates. The other teachers were DTEP year four students who had converged at LCE for December, 2010 examinations.

#### *Validity and reliability of the study*

Qualitative questionnaires allowed participants to 'speak out' their minds and express their opinions as freely as possible. Some questions answered by statistics were repeated in the questionnaire. The responses were written by the respondents themselves. The return rate was 60 per cent. Saturation of similar or related views or points was easily reached. When analysing the responses of the participants, phrases and short sentences were categorised in sub themes and consequently examined.

#### *Limitations of the study*

The study had some limitations as indicated below:

- It was not easy to access some of the necessary statistical data such as differences between low, middle and high income constituencies for reasons of confidentiality.
- All schools could not be included in the empirical study due to time and budgetary constraints. Only registered schools were investigated. Data on union membership by gender was also not accessed for the same reasons.
- The empirical study was narrowed to the feminisation of teaching profession in primary schools leaving out secondary schools and institutions of higher education. Furthermore, few primary schools were selected from each of the four sampled districts so that data collected through a highly qualitative questionnaire could be manageable.
- When analysing the responses of the participants, phrases and short sentences were categorised into sub-themes and consequently examined but numbers could not correspond as in some questions the teachers were requested to give as many responses as they could.

Finally

- Most teachers did not respond to the question on the impact of feminisation of teaching profession on performance of boy-children.

#### *Questionnaire A: responses and findings*

The questionnaire contained fifteen open-ended questions and the questions were categorised into four main sections according to major questions of the case study. The questionnaire was distributed at different times as the selected districts constituted clusters. Some of the copies of the questionnaire were distributed to schools in Mokhotlong district during teaching practice school visits. As a result the participating schools for Mokhotlong districts are not many schools. For Qacha's Nek the questionnaire was completed by LCE Distance Teacher Education Primary (DTEP) student teachers who attended contact session in Qacha's Nek in September, 2010. For Berea district some copies of a questionnaire were distributed by the researcher to few schools while a certain portion of the copies of the questionnaire were completed by Berea primary teachers who converged at LCE in Maseru for contact sessions for part-time B.Ed primary programme. Lastly, it must also be noted that some of Maseru primary teachers who participated in this study were B.ED part-time students who had also converged at LCE for mid-term contact sessions.

*Presentation, analysis and findings of data*

The following section presents data, the findings and conclusions from questionnaire A. Initial background data of a personal nature was requested and enumerated as shown in some tables below. Biographical information was sought in section I of the questionnaire. These included information on the names of districts, schools, age groups and qualifications. The numbers of male and female teachers as well as the gender of principals and the deputy principals were sought and used for validation of the existing statistical data in respect of feminisation of the teaching profession in Lesotho primary schools. The names of individual schools are not used in analysis of the data for confidentiality. Respondents were not asked to identify their gender on this questionnaire, leaving the gender desegregation of responses to the smaller sample used for questionnaire B.

*Numbers and age groups of the participants*

154 teachers participated in questionnaire A. Of those, the following age desegregations were found:

**Table 6.17 Age groups of participating teachers**

Age group (years)	20–30	30–40	40–50	50–60	Above 60	Total
Mokhotlong	11	14	9	8	1	43
Berea	11	22	6	4	1	44
Maseru	13	11	3	3	–	30
Qacha's Nek	21	11	3	2	–	37
	56	58	21	17	2	154

Most teachers are between age groups 30–40 and 20–30 years of age respectively. Only small numbers of teachers belong to age groups 40–50, 50–60, and lastly, 60 and above.

*Participating teachers by gender and schools per districts*

The 154 participating teachers were asked to indicate the numbers of both female and male teachers in their secondary schools respectively. The following table shows the numbers of women teachers among the schools selected for research.

**Table 6.18 Participating teachers by gender in selected schools by district**

Districts	Schools	All teachers	Gender of teachers			
			Males		Females	
			No.	%	No.	%
Mokhotlong	8	97	25	26	72	74
Berea	24	265	42	16	223	84
Maseru	30	491	89	32	402	68
Qacha's Nek	39	232	61	26	171	74
<b>Totals</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>80</b>

The results for these questions clearly show very high representation of women (80 per cent) in participating primary schools as opposed to representation of male counterparts (20 per cent). These results correlate with current statistics on gender imbalance in the teaching profession at the primary level.



*Schools and gender of principals and deputy principals*

**Table 6.19 Principals and deputy principals by gender in sampled schools per district**

Districts	Number of schools	Principals		Deputy principals	
		M	F	M	F
Mokhotlong	8	3	5	6	2
Berea	24	3	21	1	20
Maseru	30	7	23	3	25
Gacha's Nek	39	13	26	10	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>69</b>

Newly established primary schools do not have deputy principals, hence the number of deputy principals is not equal to the number of participating schools as indicated. In Berea and Maseru districts three and two did have deputy principals. The table shows that in primary schools more women than men hold the positions of headship.

The following questions were then asked regarding their opinions on the feminisation of the teaching profession in Lesotho:

- 1) In your opinion, why do you think many women choose to become primary teachers?
- 2) Which reasons influenced you in particular to choose to become a primary teacher?
- 3) In your opinion, what is the impact of having far more female teachers than men (feminisation) in your school?
- 4) Do you think that boys need male teachers to perform better in schools?
- 5) Do you think that having too many female teachers lead to a reduction of teachers' salaries in the profession?
- 6) What strategies do you think might help more men enter the profession?

Participants were asked to give reasons for the answer to each of the questions. The resultant data was tabulated to easily manage and organise into meaningful themes and sub-themes.

*1& 2) Answers around reasons for choosing the teaching profession*

**Table 6.20 Reasons why individual teachers choose to become primary teachers**

Sub-themes	Examples of common phrases in teachers' responses
Love of a profession and to work with small children	Like the job... enjoys playing with kids... patient... interested... easy to control... respectful... easy to work with children... passion for young ones... it is a calling...to impart knowledge and skills to children, teacher and parental role model...development of young children
Academic marginalisation	Because of qualification at COSC, ... did not qualify for the university, ...because of my poor C.O.S.C results;
Job security	...was desperate for a job, I needed a job,... only job available,... to earn a living
Access	Easy to enter into the profession...easy job.
Work and family	...Can work and stay at home...primary schools near homes, to meet domestic demands.
Opportunities	Can study part-time

Table 6.21 Opinions on reasons why women choose the teaching profession

Sub-themes	Examples of common phrases in teachers' responses
Natural fitness of job	To care for the young...care takers... responsibility to young children by nature... motherly care ... like small children ...are merciful, patient... sympathetic ... have good approach, easy to teach small ones, ...communicate better with small children... like to bring up small children... guardians to young one ... know family life... nature of women to care for the young ones... teaching is women's work... children are their responsibility...they are good at looking after small ones... woman's work is to raise children...can talk well to children...they are not harsh...naturally responsible for young ones...naturally born to care for young ones... good in caring for the young ones... they like small kids, good at raising young ones...are care takers... good at handling young ones...can nurture young ones...like the profession... development of young children
Work and family	Work near home ...no transfers... look after families...can work and stay at home...easy to find work near home...primary teachers usually stay with their families...work and look after children at home. ... can have children and live with them...want to live with their children...want to care for their families, like to stay permanently in their homes
Academic Marginalisation	Could only be accepted into primary programme ...qualified only for primary teaching, no other job available and no qualification to work in secondary schools ...low qualifications...do not qualify to work in secondary schools.
Low self esteem	Women undermine themselves...do not like challenging things...
Stress free job	Primary children are easy to control...easy to manage...easy to handle... Primary pupils are not rough... they obey rules...they are not troublesome...they are obedient... they are not stubborn ...Do not want to work with teenagers...
Job security	Easy to find job
Access	easy to get DEP qualifications ...easy to get DEP courses
Culture	By culture women look after children

Looking at the responses to both questions, it is clear that many teachers chose to become teachers for several reasons that can be related into a series of both positive and negative premises. The response themes are ordered according to frequency. On the positive side, these included: love of the profession and to work with small children; the nature of women to like and care for the young ones and fitness of job for women; the ability to work while they also look after families; easy and more open access to the job; greater job security, lack of stress, as well as other opportunities such as studying part-time. Negative reasons for joining the profession included: a feeling of academic marginalisation by circumstances, indicated that they could only be accepted into diploma programmes or that there was no other alternative employment; low self esteem (which by implication suggests that they did not have the self esteem to apply for other, more coveted roles).

### 3) Answers around the impact of feminisation on the status of the teaching profession

Table 6.22 Impact of feminisation on status of teaching profession

There is no impact	There is a positive effect	There is negative effect
No impact ...females can do what males can do... As long as they have same qualification females can do as well as males	Can handle and teach kids ...women behave better than men...know how to talk to young children ...play vital role in handling the young ...Can solve problems of small children ...female teachers work hard.	Women are lazy to carry out manual work and other duties ...gender bias decision making ...Children will think teaching is for women ... it is women's profession... conflicts...females like to gossip ... jealous, like to quarrel and can affect performance of the school and some time for teaching affected ... men think it is women's work or gender-oriented profession ... it is unfavourable working environment for men... Basotho customs undermine women ... women considered as inferior...primary schools taken as day care centres... some years back only females could teach when men go to the mines in south Africa.

There are conflicting opinions with regard to the impact of feminisation of the teaching profession. Some teachers feel that there is no impact on the teaching profession as the qualifications themselves are independent of whether a person is a female or a male. In other words, the preponderance of women in the teaching profession indicated that both females and males can equally perform well. On the other hand, some teachers felt that feminisation has had a negative impact on status of teaching profession for reasons such as the gender prejudices associated with women, poor decision making and the creation of a working environment that no longer appears applicable to men. Many participants did note the issue with salaries, highlighting that some time ago fewer men began to work in primary schools as many opted to work in the mines where the salaries were better (MOET 2006).

4) *Answers around whether boys need male teachers to perform better in school*  
 The responses of the participants also showed conflicting opinions with regard to this issue. Most teachers indicated that the gender of the teacher has no impact on performance of boys but without giving reasons. Those who did feel that more male teachers were needed indicated the following:

**Table 6.23 Impact of feminisation on performance of boys**

No!	Yes! Reasons
No! They do not need male teachers (with no reasons given).	Boys listen better if taught by males ...for discipline ...they need men as role models ...women are gender bias ... Boys need male teachers to control their behaviour ... discipline problems ... Boys need men for their needs ...many boys drop out because they have no role models. ...Because of weak nature of women... some activities need to be done by men ...

Despite those who answered with a view that feminisation had had a negative impact, the general opinion appears to be that the feminisation of the teaching profession has no impact on performance of boys in schools. Those who are of the opinion that feminisation of teaching profession has an impact of performance of boys indicate that these were primarily for discipline and good performance, and that boys need men as role models. For example, they point out that despite the fact that female teachers know how to handle small children, they may be lacking necessary skills to handle disciplinary problems of boys in schools. The implication is that this can affect the performance of boys negatively because of reasons including what some respondents described as the 'soft nature of women'.

5) *Answers around the impact of feminisation on the salaries of teachers*

**Table 6.24 Impact of feminisation on salaries of teachers**

No!	Yes! Negative effect
No reasons given.	Low because it is assumed that their husbands earn some salaries ... females are afraid to stand up for their rights. E.g. fighting for salary increase... Because of weak nature of women ...males need more salaries...female teachers do not fight for salaries they are satisfied with little ... they accept every thing ...even poor salaries...if salaries are not good men move away.

Most participants did not respond to this question. Many did not appear to fully understand the thrust of the question and instead answered primarily to the issue of prejudices in salaries between male and female teachers already within the system. However, most respondents did begin to address the issue by also responding that – unlike female teachers – male teachers can fight for salary increases if there are more of them in primary schools. The view appears to be that as men are less represented,

their voices in the advocacy for good salaries and other opportunities may not be heard. It was acknowledged that many had left the profession for 'greener pastures' in neighbouring South Africa.

#### *6) Answers around strategies for attracting and retaining men into the teaching profession*

Most teachers responded and suggested the following strategies to address high levels of feminisation in primary schools in their own words:

*Changing attitudes of men towards taking care of small children..., increase of salaries and attractive salaries,... improve working conditions/ infrastructure,... introduction of practical subjects, (men) be given leadership positions and incentives like housing allowances,...introduction of subject specialisations or subject teaching ...and equal opportunities for both secondary and primary teachers.*

The most common response was to increase salaries and improve of working conditions in primary schools. The teachers' responses on what can be done to retain men in the teaching profession included the following were similar:

All in all the teachers seem to have the following opinions with regard to attracting and retaining men in teaching profession:

- Increasing salaries and improving working conditions like introduction of subject teaching and improvement of infrastructure – this was by far the most common response;
- In-service training to change male teachers' attitudes towards teaching young children;
- Address male drop-outs from school and increasing access for male students in teacher training institutions by giving them administrative positions.

#### *Questionnaire B: presentation, analysis and the findings of the data*

Questionnaire B used a much smaller sample of teachers (60 in total, 30 men and 30 women) and requested that respondents indicate their gender in the questionnaire so that the data responses could be disaggregated. The same five open-ended questions were used.

#### *Responses of male teachers*

##### *Reasons for choosing to become teachers*

This question required male teachers to give reasons for choosing to become schoolteachers. All 24 male teachers responded and gave the following reasons.

*Working with young children is easy (11)... to improve the quality of education in Lesotho (3)... to help children develop/raise/ at an early stage (4)... wanted to earn a salary (4)... was limited to/by teaching by my COSC results (2).*

Generally, it can be deduced from the results that male teachers mostly chose teaching because they felt it was easy work to help to raise and teach children. Only a few indicated that their primary motivation was improve the quality of education. Two felt that they were forced by the circumstances because of not having very good COSC results that marginalised them to opt for teaching to earn a living.

##### *Impact of feminisation on the status of teaching profession*

The questionnaire requested the male teachers to give their views regarding the impact of having more female teachers on the status of the teaching profession. Three

teachers did not respond to this question, 21 teachers responded, and 14 teachers responded that they felt there had been an impact on the status of the profession and gave the following reasons:

*Females are not able to discipline learners, especially older boys and teenage girls(4)...they like (cause) conflicts (5)...make teaching seem a female career (2) ...females are afraid to fight for their rights hence the low salaries in the teaching profession (3).*

From the views above it appears that some male teachers feel that women teachers have a negative impact on the teaching profession due to their failure to discipline older boys and teenage girls. There were also more cryptic responses that indicated a negative male view of women "liking" and "causing" conflicts, while some felt that large numbers of women in the profession make teaching seem like an inferior profession because they are afraid to fight for their rights, hence the low salaries in the teaching profession.

However, seven teachers responded that the status had not been negatively impacted, and provided the following reasons:

*Female teachers have skills for educating small children (3) ...Baby sitting is done well by females (2)...women understand children's problems better.(2)*

From the results above it is revealed that some teachers do not believe that having more female teachers has anything to do with a lowering in the status of the profession, and instead feel that women are well suited due to innate skills for teaching small children and understanding their problems better. Those male teachers who responded were of the opinion that women are actually better suited to the job of teaching young children, implying that the status cannot be impacted because primary teaching is quite a gendered profession in their view.

#### *Impact of feminisation on performance of boys*

This required teachers to respond on whether they felt a higher proportion of female teachers had made any difference to the way boys performed. The results are presented below: All 24 teachers responded. 15 teachers felt that feminisation had resulted in a negative impact (often coupled with an inference that more male teachers are needed) and gave the following reasons:

*Male teachers can help with any male challenges(7)...male teachers are better able help with discipline problems(7)...boys can freely share their problems with male teachers (4)...boys relate better with male teachers(3)... boys behave badly and undermine female teachers(3).*

What transpires from these results is more than half of the male respondents in the research felt that men are in a better position to deal with the challenges and disciplinary problems of boys as the boys relate better with them.

Nine teachers who were opposed to the view that feminisation had had any (negative impact) or that boys need male teachers to perform well had the following reasons:

*Male and female teachers perform the same (6)... It depends on individuals (3).*

This indicates that a while less than half of the respondents, a sizeable proportion of male teachers felt that having lots of women in teaching profession does not affect the performance of boys. These teachers held the view that male and female teachers perform the same, and boys' performance all depended on individual teachers and their abilities as opposed to the gender of the teacher.

#### *Impact of feminisation on salaries of teachers*

This requested the teachers' views regarding the impact of having more female teachers on teachers' salaries. The responses are presented below:

Three male teachers felt that there had been a negative impact on salaries due to feminisation and offered the following reasons:

*Female teachers do not know their work (1)...female needs are cheaper hence low salaries in teaching profession... (2)*

Sixteen of the respondents appeared to respond to the question from a different perspective:

*Both sexes perform the same job... 'teachers' salaries are determined by the country's economy not by gender.*

Those who disagreed felt that – as both sexes perform the same job – salaries do not depend on gender but on the economy of the country.

#### *Strategies for attracting and retaining men in the teaching profession*

Teachers were asked to suggest the means by which male teachers may be retained and attracted into the teaching profession. The results are presented next:

*Increase teachers' salaries(13)...males should be given upper classes to teach(7)...LEC should implement one year degree after Diploma(1)... sporting activities should be increased in schools(1)...MOET should provide career guidance to influence boys to choose teaching as their career(1)...boys should be given special scholarship to study education(1).*

Motivation seems to be the general view and increasing the salaries seem to the most common suggested strategy. This indicates that despite the overarching view earlier that a high percentage of women teachers had not negatively impacted on salaries, there was still a clear linkage among participants about the gendered nature of high and low salaries within the job market. Other strategies suggested included allocating male teachers to upper classes, implementing a one year diploma by LCE; increasing sporting activities as well as providing career guidance to influence boys to choose teaching as a career and securing scholarships to further their studies in education.

#### *Responses of female teachers*

##### *Reasons for choosing the teaching profession*

Thirty-seven female teachers responded. Their responses are as follows:

*Working with young kids is easy (11)...primary school kids are respectful(5)... love for kids (9)...better chance of employment (8)... failure to acquire profession of choice (1)...had no other option (1)...it gives me time to carry on with other projects (1)...had good teacher role models (2).*

The common reason was that women find it easy to work with small children, indicating a similarity with many of the male responses to this question. However, female responses also indicated a love for children and better job security. Several also indicated that they find primary children to be respectful. The results also suggested that female teachers believe that there are better chances of securing employment as a teacher. The fact that some have good teacher role models and that are also able to carry on with other projects seem to be some of the reasons for choosing teaching as a profession.

*Impact of feminisation on status of teaching profession*

Two women did not attempt this question. Nineteen teachers did not feel that there was a negative impact and gave the following reasons:

*Male and female teachers have equal training and abilities (7)...males are harsh on small children (1)...women know a lot about children (11)... Difficult for males to teach young classes (6).*

Seven of the responses appear to be suggesting that there has been no negative impact on the teaching profession due to the fact that both genders within the profession adhere to the same standards by having equal training and abilities. A large proportion of the female teachers interviewed felt that women know more about small children, and it is more difficult for men to teach the younger classes. The common views are that while both men and women are equally trained and able, women are suited to the job of handling small children.

Sixteen women felt that the impact of more women on the profession's status was negative and provided the following reasons:

*...males assist in the growing of boys (3).... they help with discipline and develop positive attitudes in children (7)...seems that the teaching profession is inferior because of more females and there is a need to balance number of teachers to make the kids confident in their teachers (6).*

Female teachers who agree that having more female teachers has a negative impact on the teaching profession offer a variety of reasons for this. They suggest the need to balance the number of male and female teachers to make children confident in their teachers and also suggest that males are required to assist in the growing of small children; help to discipline them and to develop positive attitudes in them. The understanding is that men are mostly needed for discipline and as role models for the boys.

*Impact of feminisation on performance of boys*

Sixteen teachers felt that boys needed male teachers for better performance and presented the following reasons:

*They (men) are able to control bullies... boys would participate freely in class...boys believe females have little knowledge...need male teachers to train them in sports... need male teachers as role models...*

Some female teachers felt that boys need male teachers to perform better because they are able to control bullying, help them (boys) participate freely in class and train them in sports. They also felt that boys need male teacher role models and that boys seem to believe that female teachers have little knowledge. Generally it appears that both male and female teachers who argued for male teachers in this respect felt that

males are needed for proper socio-psychological development of boy-children so that they can perform well.

Twenty-one teachers who disagreed had the following opinions:

*Learning has nothing to do with gender (13)...both males and females have the skills to approach both boys and girls (7)...*

The common view is that learning has nothing to do with the gender of the teacher because both male and female teachers have skills in approaching both boys and girls.

#### *Impact of feminisation on salaries of teachers*

Six teachers said that there had been a negative impact and gave the following reasons:

*Women cannot fight for their rights...the men that do (construct) salary structures undermine females...females are not listened to by government...*

Some female teachers were clearly of the view that having more female teachers has a negative impact on teachers' salaries. Women's apparent inability to 'fight for their rights' is a view that was previously echoed by a few of the male respondents. Looking from the broader perspective of how salary structures are decided within government and by whom, there is an understanding that salaries within teaching may be suffering because women's employment needs are undermined within government.

However, far more were in opposition of this view and they had the following reasons:

*They are both professionals (5)...salary is the same whether male or female (26)...*

What appears to be suggested by these responses is that from the perspective of the female teachers themselves, having many women teachers does not have any impact on salaries of teachers as the professionalism of both males and females is viewed similarly.

#### *Strategies for attracting and retaining men in the teaching profession*

However, the majority of responses to the previous question immediately appear inconsistent in light of the following responses regarding the kind of strategies needed to attract and retain men within the profession, with the majority of respondents indicating that males would respond positively to an increase in teacher salaries.

*Motivate them by increasing the salary (23)...good working conditions (4)... have to be taught the importance of working with small children (6)...should be given higher classes to teach (2)...introduce more practical subjects in primary school (2).*

Motivating teachers by increasing teachers' salaries seems to be the most universal view to retain and attract teachers in the profession. Such inconsistency lead the provocative suggestion that there is a subconscious acceptance among many male and female teachers themselves that higher salaries and working conditions are an intrinsic part of being a man within the workforce. The implications of what this means in terms undermining the salary of a profession that is now dominated by women (and where therefore higher salaries appear to not be as expected) appears to be explored by only a few within the survey. Some teachers suggest training and improving working conditions, letting men teach higher classes and introducing more practical subjects in primary school.



From the results above it can be concluded that both male and female teachers put forward similar reasons for why women tend to choose teaching as their profession, the most common being the view that working with small kids is easy. On the other hand it seems that there is also a perception that some women were confined to teaching because of the results they obtained at COSC that would not allow them to further their studies in their fields of choice. Respondents also suggested that it is generally easier to secure employment in teaching than other professions.

However, there is a marked difference in the way male and female teachers regard the impact of having more female teachers on the status of the teaching profession. Males were more likely to think that female teachers are not able to discipline children and that female teachers are unable to provide boy children with the right kind of support and gender role models which could impact on their performance. Having said that, the findings did indicate that such views were far from universal, with both male and female respondents generally split in this area. Some male teachers for example think that male and female teachers are equally capable of helping boys to perform better in class. The same view is largely shared by female teachers.

Similarly, most of the male teachers as well as the female teachers believe that salaries have nothing to do with gender; but rather that they are dependent on the economy of the country. Nonetheless, to retain and attract male teachers in to the teaching profession, many respondents felt that the government of Lesotho is advised to motivate male teachers by increasing teachers' salaries. This presents an interesting contradiction within the findings that only deeper questioning of the participants will help to illuminate. It was also felt that there was a need to introduce more practical subjects, as well as implementing more sporting activities in primary schools.

### **Findings, conclusions and discussions**

Feminisation in the teaching profession in terms of high proportions of women teachers compared to men is not a new dynamic in Lesotho – the evidence suggests that women have been at the heart of education provision for several decades. However, the predominance of women within the profession in the last ten years is clearly more complex than at first glance, for while the percentage at the primary level has remained within the 'high feminisation' bracket, there has been a gradual decrease in proportionality, even as the overall numbers have risen. While at the primary level the numbers of teachers in Lesotho are not far off from projections for achieving UPE, with over 30 per cent of the primary teaching workforce currently unqualified (this being higher in the rural areas), there is a clear need for a surge in the training and strategic deployment of more qualified teachers, irrespective of their gender.

Despite the differing degrees of feminisation at all levels of education, there are more female teachers than male teachers in all districts of Lesotho in both primary and post-primary schools. Female teacher numbers are highest in primary schools in the lowlands and more especially so in the densely populated areas such as Maseru and Leribe. Statistical feminisation of the teaching profession is therefore more prominent in the urban areas – this is also where the more qualified teachers tend to stay. Feminisation is evidenced at the earliest stages of the profession, with more women entering teacher training institutions than men.

There are also more female principals than male principals in almost all districts at the primary level, although this lessens significantly at the secondary level, where women are only found as principals in any numbers primarily in the more urban lowlands. Notwithstanding the fact that there are more women than men in the teaching profession at tertiary level, what emerges is that the most senior

management and leadership positions are held by men – the notable exception to this is the teacher training college of LCE itself.

Despite the high percentages of women in the teaching profession gender balance is observed in enrolment statistics in both primary and post primary schools in Lesotho. Transition rates and the performance of pupils at both primary and junior secondary does not appear to contribute to high feminisation in the teaching profession – in other words, it does not appear to be for want of severe lack of school completion that boys choose not to pursue teaching. Gender balance is observed within junior secondary completion, with only slight and insignificant variations occurring annually. One of the starting points of high feminisation lies in the enrolments of teacher trainees at entry points into the teaching profession, and appears to be based more on choice rather than a lack of educated males wanting to become women. Overall the initial implication is that comparably, more women than men apply or 'choose' to become teachers. This in turn gives rise to further questions that would require a far more thorough probing into gender roles, male and female student socialisation within education, along with a deeper understanding of how men and women aspire towards different professional careers in Lesotho society.

Conclusions from the results of the empirical research have helped to flesh-out some of those questions and the statistical trends observed in this study, presenting a combination of reasons for higher female numbers in the profession and offering teacher perspectives on the consequences of such a trend. These ranged from the view that primary teaching was 'easy', along with other reasons that can be related to the following premise: marginalisation by academic circumstances as they indicated that they could only be accepted into diploma programmes or that there was no other alternative employment. Many women also professed a love for the profession and a desire to work with small children, along with the view that it was in the nature of women to like and care for young children. Many teachers within the study also indicated that the profession offered suitable employment conditions for women in Lesotho, allowing them the time to look after their children. Also mentioned was the benefit of greater job security.

There were however conflicting opinions with regard to the impact of feminisation. Most teachers responded that there has been no impact on the teaching profession. On the other hand, some teachers indicated that they felt feminisation has had a negative impact on the status of the teaching profession, suggesting that it led to gender biases and unfavourable working environments for men.

There were similar differing opinions regarding the impact on male students. Most teachers indicated they felt that feminisation has no impact on the performance of boys. However, for those who disagreed with this, the dominant response was around the issues of discipline, role models, and lack of respect for the knowledge of female teachers. There was a feeling that more male teachers are needed in primary schools in order to take care of discipline-related issues and also for boys to feel they could talk to someone. However, it is notable that the general opinion – particularly among women – is that feminisation of the teaching profession has no impact on the performance of boys in schools. Overall, this issue continues to remain a controversial and divisive one which – without conclusive evidence that suggests boys' are underperforming owing to a lack of male teachers – should be handled with caution.

It was also suggested that, since men are less represented in the profession, the call for good salaries and other opportunities within teaching are not being heard by government. This implies recognition that work predominantly done by women is undervalued. However, only a relatively small number of those interviewed gave this quite strong response, with the majority of respondents indicating that they felt

women's presence in the profession had nothing to do with why salaries are kept low. Nonetheless, the overall majority of teachers within the study felt that when attracting more men into the profession, it would be important to increase salaries and improve working conditions in primary schools. Similarly, the most common opinion on how to retain male teachers in primary schools was the need to increase salaries. The contradiction within those responses indicates complexities that need to be addressed in understanding some of the issues.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations offer a series of next steps for better understanding the context of feminisation within teaching in Lesotho, and how this ties-in with addressing recruitment of teachers for achieving quality EFA and the education MDGs, attracting more qualified teachers into the profession, including men into the primary sector, and issues around women's employment.

1. This report has demonstrated that there are concerns regarding provision of good salaries. Perspectives around such concerns highlight that men have increasingly felt unable to pursue the profession due to unacceptable salaries that cannot provide them with the earnings needed. The other side of this gendered situation is that women who enter teaching are going into a profession whose value is potentially not being recognised financially. It is understood that Lesotho faces the challenge of meeting EFA and the MDGs by providing more fully qualified teachers for the primary and (in particular) the secondary levels of education, and it also understood that the cost implications of that mean that budgetary constraints make salary increases a challenge for the Lesotho economy. However, it is recommended that the issue of teacher salaries be seriously reviewed and a balance found between the need for expanding teacher numbers and ensuring that the profession does not garner a reputation for low pay. The implications for this in terms of attracting the most qualified individuals for the job, along with potentially negative impacts this will have in the long term on the large numbers of women who currently populate the profession, cannot be ignored. Addressing salary concerns should be taken as being relevant and beneficial to the welfare and motivation of teachers generally, and not just for the pursuance of encouraging male teachers into the profession. While the latter may be desired as a means of dispelling gender perspectives around the suitability of men teaching primary children, policy-makers must be careful to ensure that women themselves are not pushed out of the profession if it becomes more financially desirable to men.
2. Perspectives regarding teaching as women's work appear to be widespread among both genders and these needs to be addressed if any meaningful discussion around gender balance within the primary teaching profession is to be held. Pre-service and in-service training to change male teachers' attitudes towards teaching young children is one small step toward this: training institutions could develop courses that enhance positive attitudes in males so that they can work with small children. Given the wide variances in opinion on the matter, it is also important that perspectives around women's ability to teach boys and older children also be investigated, rather than assumed. However, it is understood that these views reflect deep-rooted perspectives on the roles of men and women within Lesotho society and are therefore also part of a larger debate on gender.
3. With men and the teaching profession in Lesotho, the issue of choice by male students prior to entering teaching institutions will still need to be addressed. A tentative recommendation is to explore the pros and cons of various interventions in this area, such as introducing quota systems for male students into primary level

teacher training programmes and institutions. This recommendation is offered tentatively because it is recognised that quota systems are usually implemented in the case of marginalised groups who need to combat prejudice in a particular sector: there is nothing that indicates that this is the reason for fewer males within the profession. As a result, it would be important that any move towards such a policy would only be viable if similar positive discrimination measures were being offered in professions where women are under-represented.

4. Another tentative recommendation involves introducing more practical subjects such as carpentry, information technology, and others in primary schools as a way to possibly bring more men into the profession. Such an approach would need to be fully cognisant of the need to not over-encourage gender stereotypes in school, with both men and women teachers being encouraged to diversify their specialties when possible to include both 'masculine' and 'feminine' disciplines.

#### *Recommendations for further research*

The findings of the study indicate several possible research directions:

- In-depth analysis of gender disaggregated data at the district level of qualified and unqualified teachers.
- Empirical research among teachers at the secondary level on the feminisation debate.
- Empirical research among students at all levels of education on their perspectives regarding the gender of teachers.
- A follow-up study in next five years to see if the statistical trends have remained the same.